



April 20, 2017

**BY ELECTRONIC FILING**

Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: NOTICE OF EX PARTE**  
**GN Docket No. 17-83:** *Accelerating Broadband Deployment;*  
**WT Docket No. 16-421:** *Comment Sought on Streamlining Deployment of Small Cell Infrastructure by Improving Wireless Facilities Siting Policies; Mobilitie, LLC Petition for Declaratory Ruling.*

Ms. Dortch:

On the eve of the Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee's ("BDAC") first meeting, we write to congratulate Chairman Pai, Federal Communications Commission ("FCC" or

“Commission”) staff, and BDAC leadership as they tackle an ambitious agenda of great consequence to our companies and other Competitive Carriers Association (“CCA”)<sup>1</sup> members.

Broadband siting reform is an important precursor for deploying today’s wireless technology and next generation networks, and those networks will reinforce the need for dense small cell and distributed antenna equipment deployment to help our companies compete in the mobile marketplace. As executives of wireless and technology companies, we are proud to serve rural and regional communities throughout the United States and therefore agree with Chairman Pai that streamlining and standardizing infrastructure deployment is about bridging the digital divide in rural and underserved areas.<sup>2</sup> Competitive carriers and our customers alike recognize the importance of expanding access to high-speed mobile broadband. We urge the BDAC to consider the needs and interests of competitive carriers serving rural, underserved areas as well as urban and densely-populated cities. Serving our communities for generations and creating thousands of local jobs, our companies deploy towers, poles, fiber, and antennas of varying size to bring our customers the fastest possible broadband speeds and latest services and technologies, often across challenging terrain and with limited resources. Like funding for universal service, rational, predictable broadband deployment frameworks at the local, state and national level are important to promote connectivity in these regions outside major urban areas, and to spur economic productivity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> CCA is the nation’s leading association for competitive wireless providers and stakeholders across the United States. CCA’s membership includes nearly 100 competitive wireless providers ranging from small, rural carriers serving fewer than 5,000 customers to regional and national providers serving millions of customers. CCA also represents approximately 200 associate members including vendors and suppliers that provide products and services throughout the mobile communications supply chain.

<sup>2</sup> See Remarks of FCC Chairman Ajit Pai at the U.S.-India Business Council, Washington, D.C., at 3 (Mar. 29, 2017) (digital infrastructure is “an economic issue, a jobs issue, a competitiveness issue, an education issue, and a healthcare issue...Every American who wants to participate in our digital economy should be able to do so. We can’t allow technological innovation and the benefits that flow from it to be confined to the areas identified as hotbeds of innovation...”); see also Remarks of FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai at the CTIA Wireless Foundation Smart Cities Expo, Washington, D.C., at 2 (Nov. 2, 2016) (the Digital Empowerment Agenda “will allow all Americans, no matter their race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, no matter where they live, no matter their personal background, to access broadband and improve their lives”); Remarks Of FCC Chairman Ajit Pai At Carnegie Mellon University's Software Engineering Institute, “Bringing The Benefits Of The Digital Age To All Americans”, Pittsburgh, PA, at 4 (Mar. 15, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> See *Attachment*, CCA, Regulatory Steps to Siting Mobile Infrastructure.

CCA urges the BDAC to take into consideration CCA's siting policy objectives<sup>4</sup> proposed in a pending proceeding.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, the BDAC should, at minimum: (1) reduce unnecessary delays throughout state and local siting requirements with; (2) support new buildout opportunities by suggesting that that Commission limit inconsistent and often exorbitant right-of-way ("ROW") fees to actual costs of review and ROW maintenance; (3) seek to reduce growing costs attached to historic and environmental review requirements and establish reasonable review timelines;<sup>6</sup> (4) streamline siting on federal lands, including reasonable fee and timing clarifications; and, (5) perhaps cumulatively, create and recommend adoption of a model code which will provide certainty as we work with various state and local governments to upgrade and deploy broadband infrastructure. These suggestions will help make bridging the digital divide possible, while creating jobs and stimulating the local economies of often-poor or economically-challenged towns and counties that would benefit the most from more robust broadband deployment.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Comments of Competitive Carriers Association, WT Docket No. 16-421 (filed Mar. 8, 2017); see also Reply Comments of Competitive Carriers Association, WT Docket No. 16-421 (filed Apr. 7, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> *Comment Sought on Streamlining Deployment of Small Cell Infrastructure by Improving Wireless Facilities Siting Policies*; *Mobilitie, LLC Petition for Declaratory Ruling*, Public Notice, DA 16-1427, WT Docket No. 16-421 (rel. Dec. 22, 2016); see also *Mobilitie, LLC Petition for Declaratory Ruling, Promoting Broadband for All Americans by Prohibiting Excessive Charges for Access to Public Rights of Way* (filed Nov. 15, 2016) ("Mobilitie Petition").

<sup>6</sup> More specifically, the BDAC should review and revise National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act processes to limit prohibitive costs and unreasonable delays.

<sup>7</sup> As noted in Deere & Company's recent letter, expanding broadband deployment opportunities in rural areas is challenging and merits "special attention" considering access to high-speed broadband "is critical for virtually all sectors of our nation's economy and workforce," as well as education, healthcare, and "continued U.S. leadership in innovation." See *Ex Parte* Letter from Mark N. Lewellen, Manager of Spectrum Policy, Deere & Company, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, GN Docket No. 17-83, 1 (filed Apr. 14, 2017).

CCA and its members look forward to working with the Commission and the BDAC to lower broadband deployment barriers. We encourage the BDAC to make recommendations targeting both urban and rural deployments, keeping small carriers in mind. Please do not hesitate to contact our trade association representatives at Competitive Carriers Association with questions.

Sincerely,



Michael Prior  
President & C.E.O.  
ATN International



Ronald Smith  
President & C.E.O.  
Bluegrass Cellular



Patrick Riordan  
President & CEO  
New-Cell, Inc.  
d/b/a Cellcom



Jonathan Foxman  
President & CEO  
MTPCS, LLC  
d/b/a Cellular One



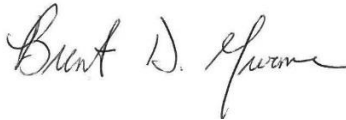
Brian Spurgeon  
General Manager  
Chat Mobility



Steven K. Berry  
President & C.E.O.  
Competitive Carriers Association



Ben Moncrief  
Vice President, Government  
Relations  
C Spire



Brent D. Groome  
Chief Executive of Marketing,  
Economic, and Strategic  
Initiatives  
HTC, Inc.



Craven Shumaker  
President & CEO  
iWireless



Terry Addington  
Chief Executive Officer  
S.I. Wireless LLC



Jon Lightle  
President & CEO  
Nex-Tech Wireless



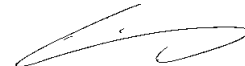
Roger Bundridge  
General Manager  
Northwest Missouri Cellular




Willie Pirtle  
Senior Vice President of  
Marketing and Sales  
Shentel



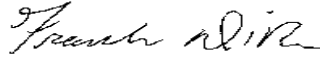
Ed Eichler  
President & C.E.O.  
Thumb Cellular



Eric Woody  
Chief Technical and Operations  
Officer  
Union Wireless



John Gockley  
Vice President, Legal and  
Regulatory Affairs  
U.S. Cellular



Frank Dirico  
President  
Viaero Wireless

CC: Chairman Ajit Pai  
Rachael Bender, Legal Advisor, Wireline, to Chairman Pai  
Nese Guendelsberger, Acting Chief, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau  
Elizabeth Pierce, Chair, BDAC  
Kelleigh Cole, Vice Chair, BDAC  
Douglas Dimitroff, Chair, Model Code for Municipalities Working Group, BDAC  
Sam Liccardo, Vice Chair, Model Code for Municipalities Working Group, BDAC  
Kelly McGriff, Chair, Model Code for States Working Group, BDAC  
Karen Charles Peterson, Vice Chair, Model Code for States, Working Group, BDAC  
Ken Simon, Chair, Competitive Access to Broadband Infrastructure Working Group,  
BDAC  
Brent Skorup, Vice Chair, Competitive Access to Broadband Infrastructure Working Group,  
BDAC  
Robert DeBroux, Chair, Removing State and Local Regulatory Barriers Working Group,  
BDAC  
Kim Keenan, Vice Chair, Removing State and Local Regulatory Barriers Working Group,  
BDAC  
Jonathan Adelstein, Chair, Streamlining Federal Siting Working Group, BDAC  
Valerie Fast Horse, Vice Chair, Streamlining Federal Siting Working Group, BDAC